

## What is Compost

**Compost** is a dark crumbly material made up of decomposed organic matter like food scraps, leaves and grass clippings that benefit the soil and restore nutrients.

**Composting** is nature's way of recycling. Mixtures of yard debris and organic household wastes collected in a pile or bin under conditions that speed up decomposition. The decomposition process is fueled by millions of microscopic organisms that produce a rich and natural soil fertilizer.

### Passive vs. Active Composting

*Passive composting* is virtually labor-free. It requires a holding bin and takes between 8-12 months to get finished compost.

*Active composting* requires more frequent turning and will produce compost much quicker than passive composting.

### 50:50 Brown to Green Ratio

It is important when composting to maintain a balance between carbon based materials (browns) and nitrogen based materials (greens).

Browns = High Carbon	Greens = High Nitrogen
Ashes, Wood	Coffee grounds
Bark	Food waste
Cardboard	Garden waste
Corn Stalks	Grass clippings
Fruit Waste	Hay
Leaves	Hedge clippings
Newspaper	Manures
Sawdust	Vegetable scraps
Stems, twigs	
Straw	
Vegetable Stalks	



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## Composting has a Peel

### Resource Pile



**Telephone:** (509) 843-1301

## Why Compost

The quote on the bottom of the page reminds us that the resource so many of us in Garfield County live off of is indeed precious and not quickly renewable. Composting is both an inexpensive way to dispose of food scraps and yard waste while reducing soil erosion and significantly improving soil quality.

### Composting:

- Reduces your volume of garbage (by ~30%)
- Saves money on disposal costs
- Enriches and adds nutrients to the soil
- Improves soil structure for better root growth, increased moisture and nutrient retention
- Balances acid and alkalinity (pH) of the soil
- Suppresses disease and harmful pests
- Reduces the need for expensive fertilizers
- Soil holds more water, you water less often

### DO Compost:

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Bread, pasta, chips
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds, filters and tea bags
- Newspaper, paper towels, napkins, tissue
- Lint, vacuum cleaner bag contents
- Leaves, grass clippings, flowers
- Cardboard (egg cartons, toilet paper tubes)

### DO NOT Compost:

- Any non-organic materials (plastic, metal)
- Meat of any kind
- Dairy products
- Pet waste
- Oils



## How to Compost

1. Choose an area approximately 4' x 4' X 4' on grass or soil that is accessible and not in direct sunlight. (Do not set next to a building)
2. To start build up a 6" layer of woody stalks at the bottom of your compost site. Alternate 4" of brown material with 2" layers of green material. Add water as needed to keep pile slightly damp. (Like a wrung-out sponge)
3. Now you're set up. Continue to add food scraps year-round by burying them in the pile and providing more brown material as needed.
4. Turn the pile regularly to aerate.
5. When the compost is dark and crumbly, and all contents are unrecognizable your compost is ready for use!

More Information Visit:  
[www.composting101.com](http://www.composting101.com)

### Troubleshooting

Problem	Solution
Compost smells	Turn the pile and add browns
Too wet	Turn the pile and add dry material
Too dry	Turn the pile and add water, then shade
Cool to the touch	Add more greens

## Compost Bins

**Make your own compost bin out of wood pallets, a garbage can or wire mesh.**

### Wood Pallet Bin:



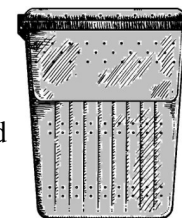
Materials: 4-6 pallets, heavy-duty plastic ties.

Use 4 pallets to form the sides of the bin, fasten the pallets together with ties. You may use the other pallets as a cover or as a base.

### Garbage Can Bin:

Materials: garbage can with cover, drill

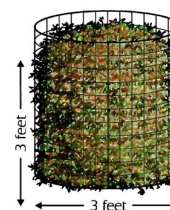
Drill holes all over the sides and bottom of the can. Keep cover on to keep animals out of it.



### Wire Mesh Bin:

Materials: 14 gauge or medium weight welded wire mesh, heavy-duty plastic ties.

Form a circle with the mesh and fasten with the ties.



You may also purchase a bin from home improvement stores, garden centers or the internet at:

Home Depot  
Kmart  
[www.composters.com](http://www.composters.com)  
[www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)



"They're making more people every day — but they ain't making any more dirt." - Will Rogers, survivor of the dust bowl